

# Advancing Behavioral Health Equity: National CLAS Standards in Action

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Tuesday, November 16, 2021  
2:30 PM – 3:30 PM ET





**Tom Coderre**

Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary and Region 1  
Administrator for Mental Health and Substance Use  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
Administration



# Behavioral Health Implementation Guide

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## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES IN HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

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## RADM Felicia Collins, MD, MPH, FAAP

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health  
Director, Office of Minority Health  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



# Advancing Behavioral Health Equity: CLAS Standards in Action

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Director, HHS Office of Minority Health

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# OMH's Mission, Functions, and Unifying Goal

**MISSION:** The mission of OMH is *to improve the health of racial and ethnic minority populations* through the development of health policies and programs that will eliminate health disparities.

## FUNCTIONS



## OMH GOAL: S<sup>3</sup>P<sup>3</sup>



S<sup>3</sup>



- Success
- Sustainability
- Spread

**Of Health Disparity  
Reducing**

P<sup>3</sup>



- Policies
- Programs
- Practices

# What is CLAS?

***Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services*** (CLAS) in Health and Health Care are services that are *respectful of and responsive to* individual cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy levels, and communication needs and employed by all members of an organization at every point of contact.

## CLAS Goals



<https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas/what-is-clas>

# Why is CLAS important?



**CMS.gov** | Health Insurance Marketplace

## EXECUTIVE ORDER 13166

Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

For information, guidance, and technical assistance on the implementation of the LEP initiative please visit <https://www.lep.gov/>

Overview of Executive Order 13166

<https://www.justice.gov/crt/executive-order-13166>

# What are the National CLAS Standards?

15 ACTION STEPS that guide  
health and health care  
professionals in  
providing...

services that  
are RESPECTFUL,  
UNDERSTANDABLE,  
EFFECTIVE & EQUITABLE.

# Themes of the National CLAS Standards

STANDARDS

**1**

**PRINCIPAL STANDARD**

**2-4**

**GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP  
& WORKFORCE**

**5-8**

**COMMUNICATION &  
LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE**

**9-15**

**ENGAGEMENT, CONTINUOUS  
IMPROVEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY**



# Behavioral Health E-Learning Program



**THINK CULTURAL HEALTH**

**FREE ACCREDITED E-LEARNING PROGRAM!**

**Improving Cultural Competency for  
Behavioral Health Professionals**

[Learn More](#)



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Office of Minority Health

- Free, accredited, e-learning program that helps behavioral health professionals increase their cultural and linguistic competency.
- Approved for 4 – 5.5 contact hours for counselors, nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers.
- Other professionals may earn a Statement of Participation.

[thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/education/behavioral-health](https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/education/behavioral-health)

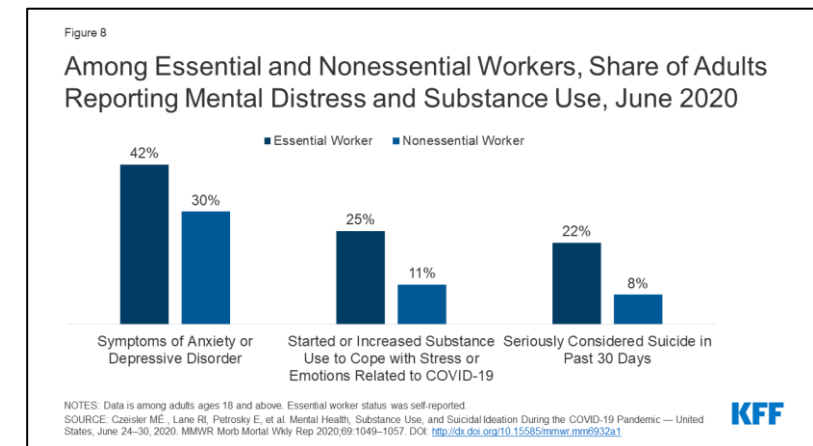
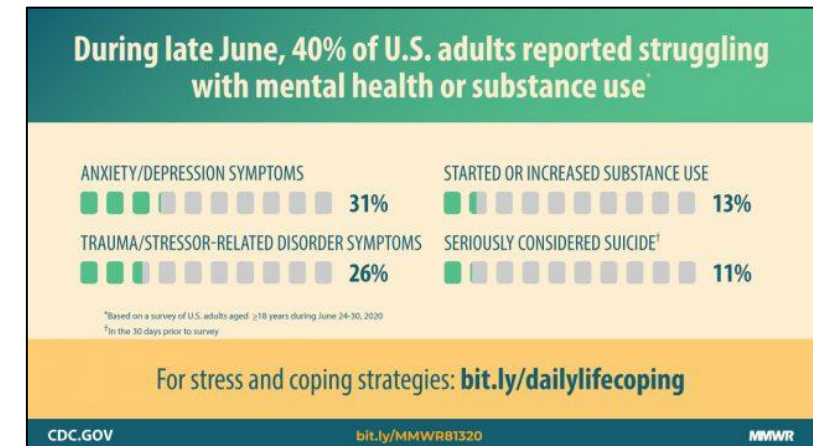
# Behavioral Health Implementation Guide

**NEW! BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IMPLEMENTATION  
GUIDE FOR THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR  
CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY  
APPROPRIATE SERVICES IN HEALTH AND  
HEALTH CARE**



# Behavioral Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Younger adults, racial & ethnic minorities, essential workers, and unpaid adult caregivers reported having experienced disproportionately worse mental health outcomes, increased substance use, and elevated suicidal ideation. ([CDC, Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020](#))
- Blacks and Latinos have substantially lower access to mental health and substance-use treatment services. ([Double Jeopardy: COVID-19 and Behavioral Health Disparities for Black and Latino Communities in the U.S. \(Submitted by OBHE\) \(samhsa.gov\)](#))





Presentation For:

SAMHSA's Advancing Behavioral Health Equity: National CLAS Standards in Action Webinar

November 16, 2021

**BE D·B·H·D·D**

Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities

Monica S. Johnson, MA, LPC

Director, Division of Behavioral Health

Jill D. Mays, MS, LPC,

Director, Office of Behavioral Health  
Prevention, Federal Grants



# CLAS Standards: Governance, Leadership & Workforce – Georgia DBHDD Perspective

# Governance

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Policy, Planning & Development

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Resource Infrastructure Within State Office

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Program Development

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Utilization of Lived Experience

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Collaborations and Partnerships



# Workforce

Annual Symposium

Webinars

Technical Assistance

Learning Series

Recruitment

Communication

Accountability & Outcomes



Are you deaf, communicate in American Sign Language (ASL), & need mental health/IDD services?

# DBHDD IS HERE TO HELP

For access to ASL Behavioral Health Clinical Support Services statewide,  
contact our community-based partner Avita Deaf Services:

**[avitadeafservices@avitapartners.org](mailto:avitadeafservices@avitapartners.org)**  
**678.513.5767**



DBHDD

Georgia  
Department of  
Behavioral Health  
& Developmental  
Disabilities

**Need Immediate Crisis Help?**  
Call Georgia Crisis  
& Access Line

**1-800-715-4225**

## Example from Georgia – Mental Health & Deaf Services

- Media & Marketing
- Designated Provider
- Recruitment of ASL Fluent Therapists & Case Managers
- ASL Fluent Interpreters (internal and external)
- Policy Development and Planning
- Workforce Training & Development
- Advisory Council

# Current Status of the Implementation: New Initiatives and Advancements



# Overview of Implementation Highlighted in SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Guide for Implementation of CLAS Standards

## Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

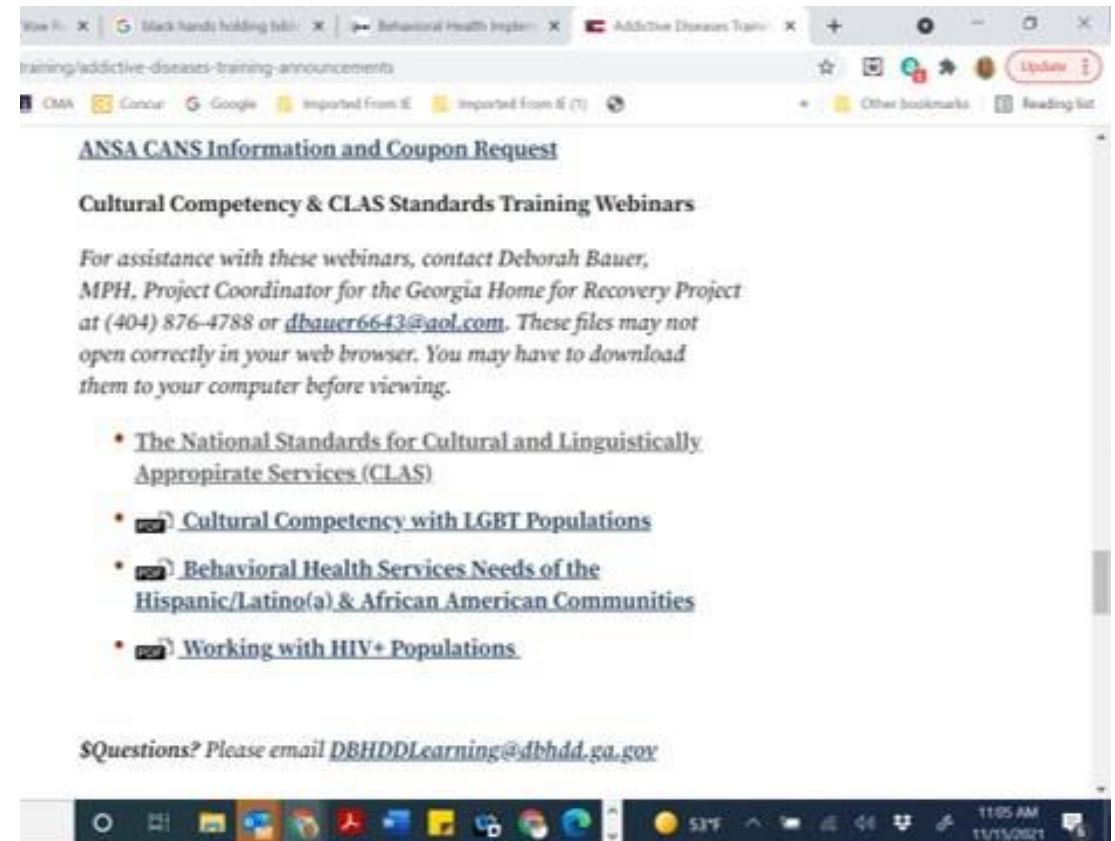
*SAMHSA Grant Program: Strategic Prevention Framework for Prescription Drugs (SPF Rx)*

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) was addressing prescription drug misuse in the state through the SPF Rx program. Their populations of focus for prevention of substance misuse included 12- to 17-year-old youth and individuals aged 18 and older.

DBHDD ensured that cultural competency was incorporated in all activities to address prescription drug misuse among all communities. DBHDD prioritized training and educating their workforce to successfully implement the National CLAS Standards throughout prevention efforts. DBHDD required SPF Rx project staff to participate in at least four webinars that provided information about the National CLAS Standards and education on disparities among communities. Some webinar topics have included:

- Introduction to the National Standards for CLAS in Health and Health Care
- Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services for African American and Hispanic Populations
- Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services for LGBT Populations
- Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services for Individuals who are HIV Positive

Upon completing the training, adherence to the National CLAS Standards were monitored. Technical assistance (TA) was available to address challenges and issues that may have arisen and additional training was offered to project and partner staff to enhance their capacity to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services. DBHDD was committed to addressing the needs of all community members by tailoring project training and TA activities on an ongoing basis.



# **Tip: Effective Implementation Must Be Multi-tiered**

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**Policies &  
Procedures**

**Workforce  
Development**

**Intentional  
Promotion &  
Programming**

# Policies and Procedures

Table of Contents

Attachments (0)

APPLICABILITY

POLICY

PROCEDURES


LEGAL REFERENCES

PROFESSIONAL ST...

RELATED POLICIES

Current Status: Active

PolicyStat ID: 5012903



Georgia Department  
of Behavioral Health  
& Developmental  
Disabilities

Creation: 4/22/2015

Effective: 6/4/2018

Last Reviewed: 6/4/2018

Last Revision: 6/4/2018

Next Review: 6/3/2020

Owner: Emile Risby, M.D.: Medical Director

Chapter: Hospital Operations

Sections: Provision of Care, Treatment and Services

Individual Food Choices and Menus, 03-637


APPLICABILITY

DBHDD Hospitals

POLICY

DBHDD ensures menus that provide well balanced meals for individuals that meet the criteria of recommended daily dietary allowances from the [Food and Nutrition Board - Institute of Medicine](#) and [National Academy of Sciences Research Council](#). In addition, each hospital allows for flexibility in menus that meet individual choices in the taste and consistency of foods, religious observances, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Type here to search

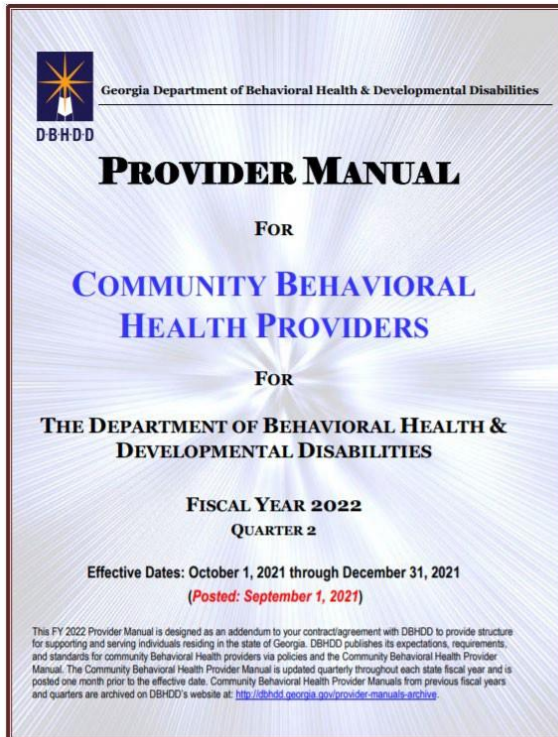


54°F



# Policies and Procedures

- ❑ Many programs, such as our AD Peer Support Programs, are required to have and *Organizational Plan* addressing, among other things, “A description of the governing body and /or advisory structures indicating how this body/structure meets requirements for peer leadership and cultural diversity.”
  - I. Required Business Practices and Policies
    - A. “The provider’s practice of cultural diversity competency is evident by:
      - 1. Staff articulating an understanding of the social, cultural, religious and other needs and differences unique to the individual;
        - a. That such articulation, respect, and inclusion of cultural diversity will include Deaf Culture.
        - b. Staff honoring these differences and preferences (such as worship or dietary preferences) in the daily services/treatment of the individual; and
        - c. The inclusion of cultural competency in Quality Improvement processes”
- ❑ “Within the first sixty (60) days from date of hire, all staff having direct contact with individuals shall receive the following training including, but not limited to:
  - I. Ethics, cultural competence and cultural responsiveness;”



# Workforce Development: Diversity Works!

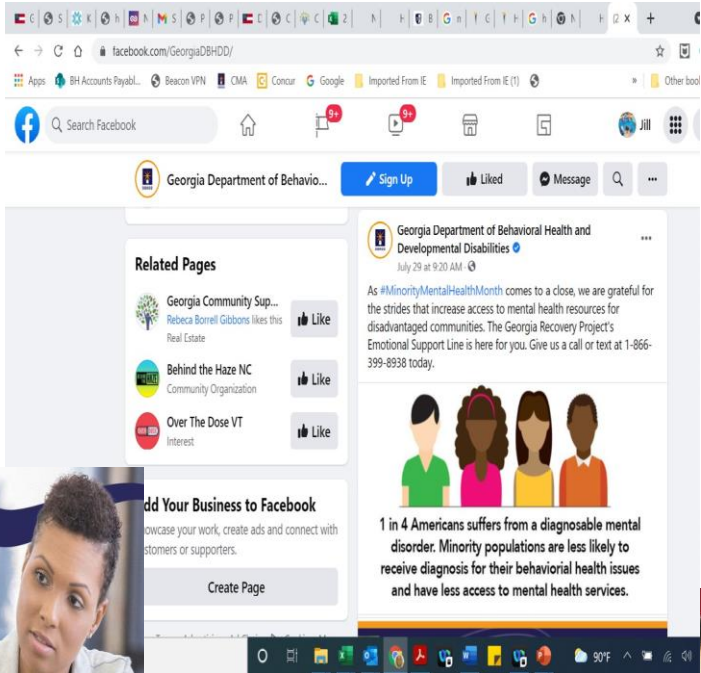
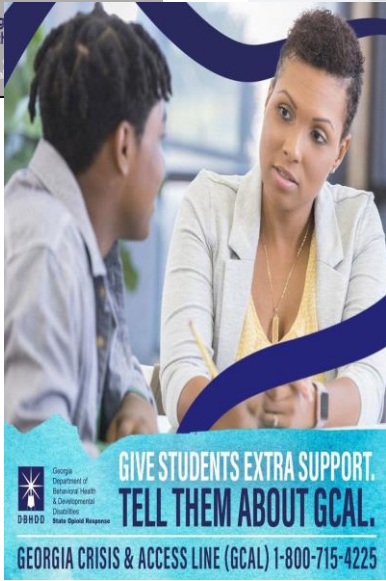
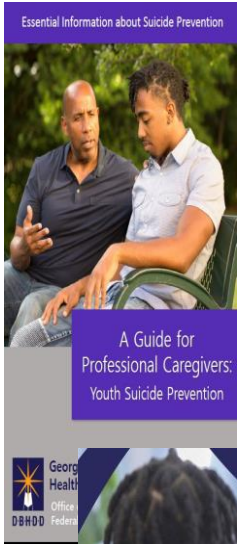


- The Intersection between Cultural Competency and Behavioral Health
- Safety & Healing Informed Approaches to Self and Community Care
- Language as a Tool to combat Stigma
- Boomer, Millennial, So What? Understanding Generational Differences
- Conversations on Sexuality & Gender
- How to Effectively Incorporate Spirituality into Prevention & Treatment Services
- Exploring Cultural Competence with Race & Ethnicity in Mind
- The Rich and the Poor: Socioeconomic Status and Its Influence
- Providing Services for Returning Citizens
- Serving Veterans and Active Duty Military Service Members

# Intentional Promotion and Programming



“IF I knew you were coming. . .”





# The Importance of Cultural Responsivity/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Prevention Services



**2020-2021 Major Campaign (Spanish Version)**

# The Importance of Cultural Responsivity/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Prevention Services



Vietnamese Naloxone Messaging

# Georgia's Prevention Projects to Promote Health Equity

**Deaf Services**

Culture Fests

**Beauty &  
Barbershops**

Prevention  
Clubhouses

African-American  
Maternal  
Substance Abuse  
Prevention

College  
Prevention  
Projects



# Office of Prevention + Office of Deaf Services



AASD is Atlanta's only day school for deaf and hard of hearing students, with approximately 190 students ages 3-21 from over 30 countries across Atlanta. Our mission is to provide a language-rich, student-centered learning environment through American Sign Language and English for the purpose of empowering our students to live independent, contributing members of society.



Sources of Strength is a best practice youth suicide prevention project designed to harness the power of peer social networks to change unhealthy norms and culture, ultimately preventing suicide, bullying, and substance abuse.



**ATLANTA AREA SCHOOL  
FOR THE DEAF**





# Clarkston Culture Fest

An Immense  
**CELEBRATION OF CULTURE**

Since Clarkston, Georgia is **one of the most culturally diverse communities you'll ever find**, it is a perfect display of what 'culture' can be

&

a perfect place to provide **substance abuse and suicide prevention information** for a wide variety of audiences.

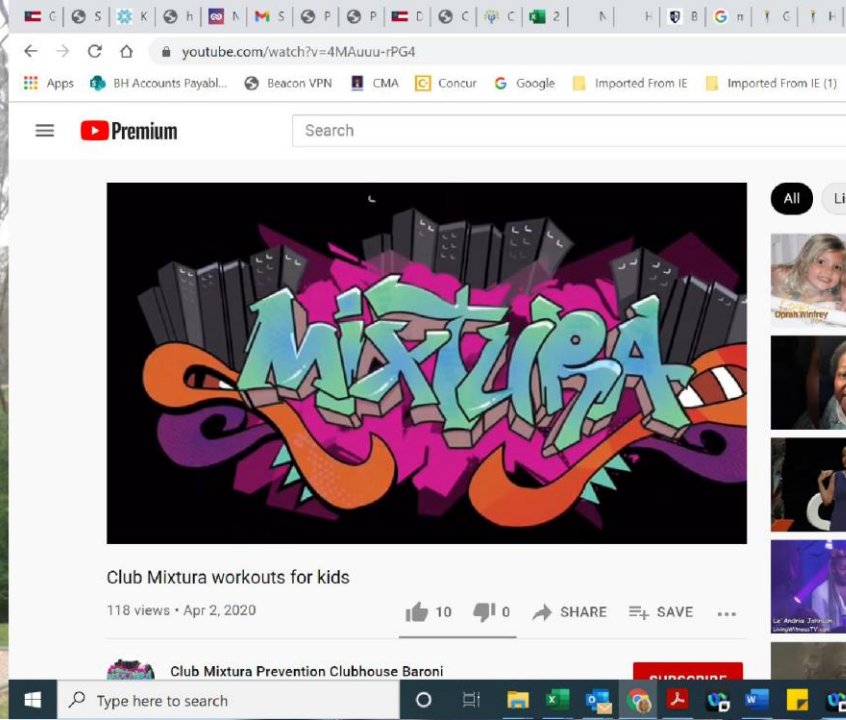






# The Confess Project

The Confess Project is the first and largest organization committed to building a culture of mental health for young men boys of color, and their families. How? We focus on empowering frontline heroes and sheroes in Communities across America. More specifically, we train barbers to be mental health advocates.



# Prevention Clubhouses

- Innovative and unique **Prevention Clubhouses**
- Each clubhouse is unique to its surrounding community needs and provides a culturally appropriate support to the youth and their families and a safe, engaging, and fun space to learn the skills needed to maximize protective factors and thrive and cope despite risk factors.



# African-American Maternal Substance Abuse Prevention

- Partnership with the Morehouse School of Medicine
- Community-based education, problem identification and referral services for African American women at teen clinics, with DFACs, Family Connections, Happy Mothers/Happy Babies, Health Clinics & Departments, and college campus clinics, etc.
- Including a Train-the-Trainer program with incentives for sustaining beyond the grant period



# Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Prevention & Health Promotion Project

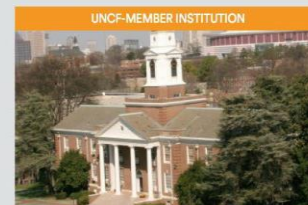
Partnership with African-American Behavioral Health Center of Excellence at the Morehouse School of Medicine to develop culturally appropriate substance use and suicide prevention, as well as mental health promotion, education, and awareness interventions and campaigns to address the health disparities impacting African American youth and their families.



## HBCUs in Georgia



Albany State University



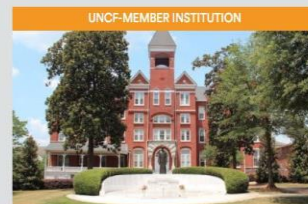
Clark Atlanta University



Fort Valley State University



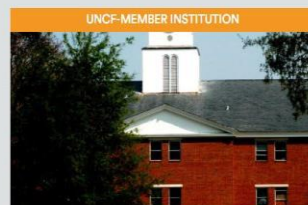
Interdenominational Theological Center



Morehouse College



Morehouse School of Medicine



Paine College



Savannah State University



Spelman College

# LatinX College and University Students Prevention & Mental Health Promotion Project

- Work in partnership with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to develop culturally appropriate substance use and suicide prevention, as well as mental health promotion education and awareness interventions and campaigns to address the health disparities impacting LatinX youth and their families.
- Georgia Member Institutions of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities [HACU] (Dalton State College, Emory University, Georgia Southern University) + Georgia Gwinnett College and other 2 and 4-year schools with more than 9-10 K students and 10% or more Hispanic student enrollment





# Other Strategic Partnerships

DBHDD is in the business of recovery, and that requires us to meet people where they are. It also means we must approach our work in a person-centered and culturally competent fashion.

- **Strategic Partnerships**

- The **Division of Aging Services (DAS)**, other partners in state government, and NCAPPS national technical assistance providers to promote person-centered practices in state health and wellbeing programs
- **National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)** Division of Peer Support subgroup on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- National thought leaders on a racial equity project with **Georgetown University's National Center for Cultural Competence** to promote racial equity in human service systems and reduce health disparities by teaching members to think critically about the impact of policies, practices and behaviors on diverse populations.



# Next Steps

**There is still so much work to be done. We must continue to work until everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible.**

## **Strategic work ahead:**

- DBHDD is a strategic partner for SAMHSA's newly established Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health Disparities (COE-BH) for African Americans, housed at the Morehouse School of Medicine's Southeast Addiction Technology Transfer Center (SATTC).
- ???



# Bhutanese Community of Central Ohio (BCCO)

A Community Based Non-Profit 501(C)3 Organization

Sudarshan Pyakurel  
Executive Director

# Overview of the Community Served by BCCO

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**Mission Statement:** To Serve community members with culturally appropriate social services and empower them through education and advocacy.

✓ History: Started in 2009,  
✓ Serve community members since 2014  
✓ Post-Resettlement Services

**Bravely fighting COVID-19  
and protecting the  
community**

**Surviving Bhutan's ethnic cleansing  
+ two decades in refugee camps...  
now building hopeful future in Ohio**

**Delivering essential services  
every day to the most  
vulnerable**





## Why implementing the National CLAS Standard is Important

- Since 2009, we have been advocating about Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services
- It is in BCCO's Mission Statement. Why?
- Language and Culture of a community is the Eye and Ear



## Five Signs of Emotional Suffering



Personality  
Change



Agitated



Withdrawal



Poor  
Self-Care



Hopelessness



Five Signs of Emotional Suffering  
संवेगात्मक चिन्ता वा पीडाका पाँच लक्षणहरू

## How That Relates to the National CLAS Standards?

# संवेगात्मक चिन्ता वा पीडा

## The Five Signs of Emotional Suffering



# Suffering is Universal



व्यक्तित्व (बानीव्यहोरा) मा परिवर्तन देखिनु।  
Personality Change



एक्कासि रिसाउने, चिन्तित देखिने, उत्तेजित हुने, वा लहडी देखिने।  
Uncharacteristically angry, anxious, agitated, or moody



अलग्गिएर बस्ने वा अरु व्यक्तिहरूबाट टाढिँदै जाँने।  
Withdrawn or isolation from other people



आफ्नै हेरविचारप्रति वेवास्ता गर्ने साथै खतरामूलक काममा  
May neglect self care and engage in risky behavior



निराशाले ढाकिनुका साथै बिभिन्न समस्या  
Overcome by hopelessness and overcome

- When Language Change,  
the Perception Change

- It relates to me

- I am not alone

# Challenges

- Mental Health (Trauma, Anxiety, Depression PTSD)
- Teens and Youth
  - Chemical dependency and Overdose



[Asian Am J Psychol.](#) Author manuscript; available in PMC 2020 Jan 24.

PMCID: PMC6980157

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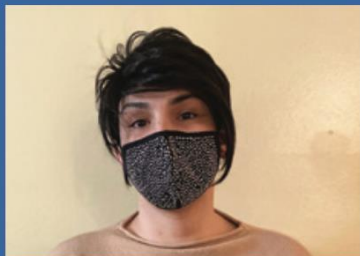
NIHMSID: NIHMS1006140

[Asian Am J Psychol.](#) 2018 Dec; 9(4): 270–283.

PMID: [31984114](#)

doi: [10.1037/aap0000125](https://doi.org/10.1037/aap0000125)

## **Suicide and Suicide-related Behavior among Bhutanese Refugees Resettled in the United States**



**Salah.** "I felt welcomed when I first came in to BCCO and no one was mean to me. They helped me

## Community therapists help Nepali refugees from Bhutan peel back layers of trauma

The Columbus Dispatch

ET June 27, 2021 | Updated 6:23 a.m. ET June 27, 2021



Sarah  
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## COVID-19 increased mental health needs. How a Northland agency is trying to help

**Holly Zachariah** The Columbus Dispatch

Published 6:00 a.m. ET Nov. 10, 2021 | Updated 10:35 a.m. ET Nov. 10, 2021

[View Comments](#)



We're  
your  
you



Health First Aid Trainings in 2021

## Heroes: Columbus refugees stay safe

*BRAVE project connects Bhutanese refugees to answer COVID-related questions*

Monthly  
2021

## Success Stories

- BRAVE Project
- Mental Health Awareness
- Outstanding Community Services



# Implementing CLAS Standards





# Hola


Lilliana St.Clair, MS, LPC

From Redford, TX


Living in Tulsa, OK



# Who is Dayspring Community Services?



Preferred Family Healthcare  
is a dynamic and caring  
organization committed to  
providing integrated care to  
assist individuals in achieving  
overall health and wellness.



Our services span various  
modalities and care types  
over four states: Missouri,  
Oklahoma, Illinois, Kansas.





# *Why* Implement CLAS Standards?



## Implementing CLAS at PFH: Dayspring

- » Services are person centered
- » Culturally sensitive
- » Effectiveness and impact of care increases
- » Individuals achieve overall health

# Implementing CLAS at PFH: Dayspring



# Interacting with our COMMUNITIES

## Law Enforcement

Partner with law enforcement to educate on dealing with mental health crisis situations.

## Coalitions

Our staff are active members of community coalitions tackling multiple issues.

## Policy

Advocate for policies to be inclusive for all members of the community.

## Accessibility

We continuously assess if our services are accessible to our clients i.e. location, ease of use.

## Translation

Work with community partners to ensure that services are provided in clients language.

AND MORE!





Mobile Units help us reach the community where they are!



# Interacting with our CLIENTS

## Technology

Obtain hot spots to help rural communities have access to care.

## Art-C Calendar

Our diversity calendar available in print and online is used for groups, personal growth

## Otherly Abled

We help clients use their voice and choose how to describe their abilities.

## Accessibility

We go where the client is! Home visits, in the community, school based, and/or virtually.

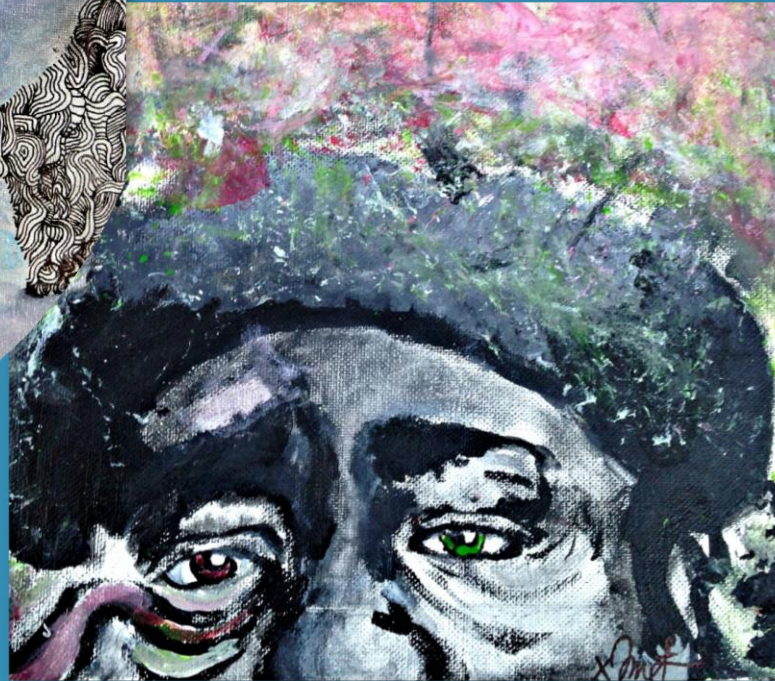
## Transparency

Client's voice is involved in making policies, procedures.

## AND MORE!



# Client Centered Care





# Interacting with our STAFF

## Training

Through access to supervision, internal and external trainings, we ensure our staff are up to date!

## Staff Recognition

We host events, give t-shirts, Bilingual stipend, and find small and big ways to show our teams appreciation.

## Competent

You have access to a variety of trainings both internally and externally to aid in cultural competency.

## Open Door Policy

PFH culture allows for everyone to feel comfortable to have difficult conversations.

## Passion

Staff passions and beliefs are honored and space created to learn from one another.

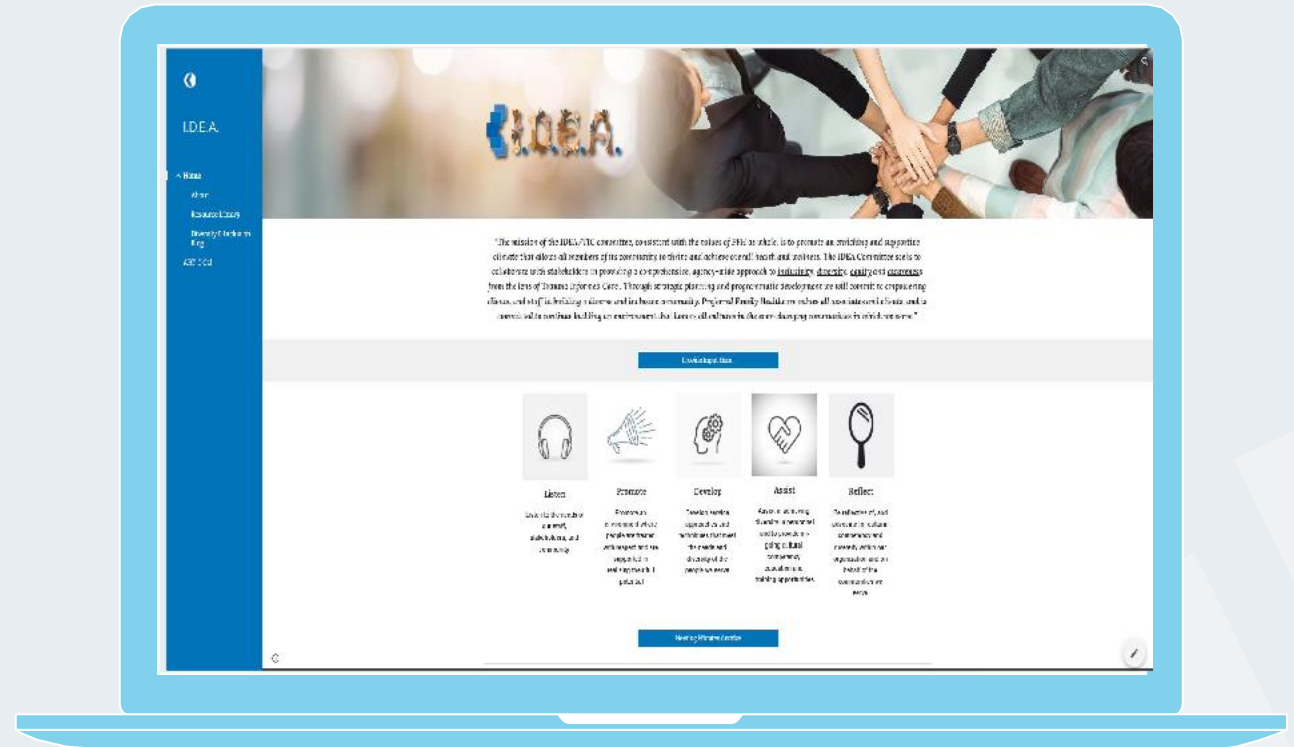
## AND MORE!





# I.D.E.A.

## Interactive Site



## CLAS Standards Monitored

# Principal Standard

SNAP during Intake

ICARE distribution and  
staff performance  
reviews

Monitoring of trends  
through Chart Reviews  
and Satisfaction surveys



# Governance, Leadership, and Workforce

## CLAS Standards Monitored

IDEA committee includes representatives from various departments.

HR statistics of workforce backgrounds and skills.

Continuing education is tailored to community needs, pulling in community leaders to teach.



## CLAS Standards Monitored

# Communication and Language Assistance

PFH Contracted professionals: i.e. LAMP, Spanish interpreters.

Cross language material is available for communities who need it.

Staff address preferences and needs during intake.

# Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability

## CLAS Standards Monitored

### Plans and Tasks:

IDEA committee, delegated by leadership, develops an annual fy plan with action items.

Monthly meetings to track and develop ongoing immediate improvements/ tasks).

Development of Cultural Sensitivity Plan.

Both long term goals and short term objectives.

# Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability

## CLAS Standards Monitored

### Survey Assessments and Service Monitoring:

PFH conducts an annual employee feedback / engagement survey.

PFH conducts an annual client / parent/ stakeholder survey

Ongoing service-based data collection that reflects culture focused groups/ services (collected through EHR).

Demographic data is collected from clients and staff.

# Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability

## CLAS Standards Monitored

### Communication and Implementation:

PFH uses 3 primary modes of distributive communication.

1. Leadership disseminates down through org chart
2. Mass communication via company newsletter
3. IxI communication during QI meetings with local directors

Change process available paper/electronic, TIPS (Thoughts, Improvement, Problem, and Solutions)




# THANKS!

## Any questions?

Lilliana St.Clair, LPC

Project Director

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  - » [lstclair@dayspring.pfh.org](mailto:lstclair@dayspring.pfh.org)
- 

# CREDITS

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- » Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)
- » Photographs by [Unsplash](#)



# Questions & Answers



**Tom Coderre**

Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary and Region 1  
Administrator for Mental Health and Substance Use  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
Administration







# Wrap-Up & Closing Remarks

# Thank You

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